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EDGAR ALLAN POE

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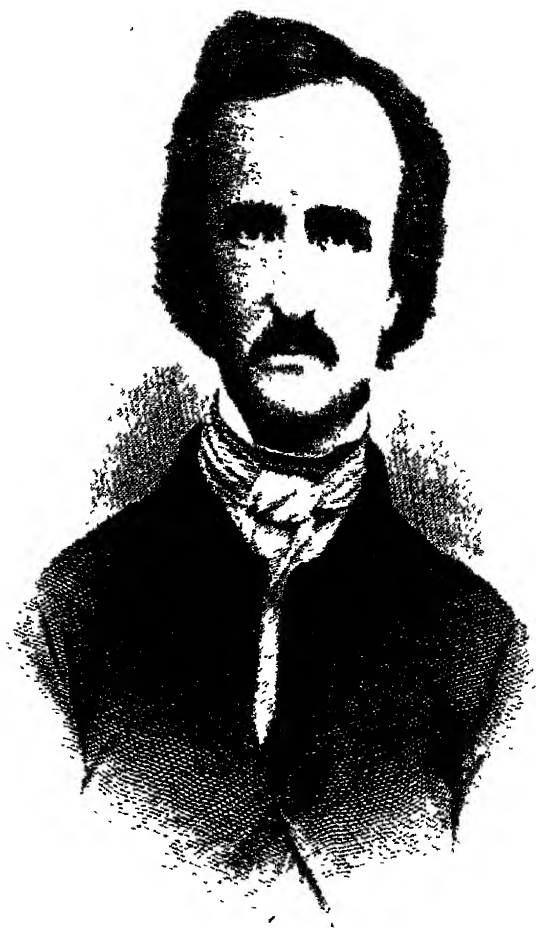
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THE LYRICAL POEMS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

ARTHUR SYMONS

and a Portrait of Poe



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INTRODUCTION

THE poems which follow are the work of a poet who thought persistently about poetry as an art, and would have reduced inspiration to a method. At their best they are perfectly defined by Baudelaire, when he says of Poe's poetry that it is a thing 'deep and shimmering as dreams, mysterious and perfect as crystal.' Not all the poems, few as they are, are flawless; they are so few that all have been reprinted here except the two narrative poems and the fragment of a dramatic poem, 'Tamerlane,' 'Al Aaraaf,' and 'Scenes from "Politian."' In these few unequal poems we have the only essential poetry which has yet come from America, Walt Whitman's vast poetical nature having remained a nature only, not come to be an art. Because Poe was fantastically inhuman, a conscious artist doing strange things with strange materials, not every one has realised how fine, how rare, was that beauty which this artist brought into the world. It is true that there was in the genius of Poe something meretricious; it is the flaw in his genius; but then he had genius, and Whittier and Bryant and Longfellow and Lowell had only varying degrees of talent. Let us admit, by all means, that a diamond is flawed; but need we compare it with this and that fine specimen of quartz?

Poe defined as 'the rhythmical creation of beauty'; and the first element of poetry he found in

‘the thirst for supernal beauty.’ ‘It is not,’ he repeats, ‘the mere appreciation of the beauty before us. It is a wild effort to reach the beauty above. . . . Inspired with a prescient ecstasy of the beauty beyond the grave, it struggles by multiform novelty of combination among the things and thoughts of time, to anticipate some portions of that loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain solely to eternity.’ The poet, then, ‘should limit his endeavours to the creation of novel moods of beauty, in form, in colour, in sound, in sentiment.’ Note the emphasis upon novel: to Poe there was no beauty without strangeness. He makes his favourite quotation: “‘But,” says Lord Bacon (how justly!) “there is no exquisite beauty without some strangeness in the proportions.” Take away this element of strangeness—of unexpectedness—of novelty—of originality—call it what we will—and all that is ethereal in loveliness is lost at once. . . . We lose, in short, all that assimilates the beauty of earth with what we dream of the beauty of heaven!’ And, as another of the elements of this creation of beauty, there must be indefiniteness. ‘I know,’ he says, ‘that indefiniteness is an element of the true music—I mean of the true musical expression. Give to it any undue decision—imbue it with any very determinate tone—and you deprive it at once of its ethereal, its ideal, its intrinsic and essential character.’ Do we not seem to find here an anticipation of Verlaine’s ‘Art Poétique’: ‘*Pas la couleur, rien que la nuance*’? And is not the essential part of the poetical theory of Mallarmé and of the French Symbolists enunciated in this definition and commendation of ‘that class of composition in which there lies beneath the transparent upper current of meaning an under or *suggestive* one’? To this ‘mystic

or secondary expression' he attributes 'the vast force of an accompaniment in music. . . . With each note of the lyre is heard a ghostly, and not always a distinct, but an august and soul-exalting *echo*.' Has anything that has been said since on that conception of poetry without which no writer of verse would, I suppose, venture to write verse, been said more subtly or more precisely?

And Poe does not end here, with what may seem generalities. 'Beyond the limits of beauty,' he says of poetry, 'its province does not extend. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience it has only collateral relations. It has no dependence, unless incidentally, upon either Duty or Truth.' And of the poet who said, not meaning anything very different from what Poe meant, 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' he says: 'He is the sole British poet who has never erred in his themes.' And, as if still thinking of Keats, he says: 'It is chiefly amid forms of physical loveliness (we use the word *forms* in its widest sense as embracing modifications of sound and colour) that the soul seeks the realisation of its dreams of Beauty.' And, with more earnest insistence on those limits which he knew to be so much more necessary to guard in poetry than its so-called freedom ('the true artist will avail himself of no "licence" whatever'), he states, with categorical precision: 'A poem, in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its *immediate* object, pleasure, not truth; to romance, by having, for its object, an *indefinite* instead of a *definite* pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained; romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with *indefinite* sensations, to which end music is an *essential*, since comprehension of sweet

sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music, without the idea, is simply music; the idea, without the music, is prose, from its very definiteness.'

And he would set these careful limits, not only to the province of poetic pleasure, but to the form and length of actual poetry. 'A long poem,' he says, with more truth than most people are quite willing to see, 'is a paradox.' 'I hold,' he says elsewhere, 'that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, "a long poem," is simply a flat contradiction in terms.' And, after defining his ideal, 'a rhymed poem, not to exceed in length what might be perused in an hour,' he says, very justly, that 'within this limit alone can the highest order of true poetry exist.' In another essay he narrows the duration to 'half an hour, at the very utmost'; and wisely. In yet another essay he suggests 'a length of about one hundred lines' as the length most likely to convey that unity of impression, with that intensity of true poetical effect, in which he found the highest merit of poetry. Remember, that of true poetry we have already had his definition; and concede, that a loftier conception of poetry as poetry, poetry as lyric essence, cannot easily be imagined. We are too ready to accept, under the general name of poetry, whatever is written eloquently in metre; to call even Wordsworth's 'Excursion' a poem, and to accept 'Paradise Lost' as throughout a poem. But there are not thirty consecutive lines of essential poetry in the whole of 'The Excursion,' and, while 'Paradise Lost' is crammed with essential poetry, that poetry is not consecutive; but the splendid workmanship comes in to fill up the gaps, and to hold our attention until the poetry returns. Essential poetry is an essence too

strong for the general sense; diluted, it can be endured; and, for the most part, the poets dilute it. Poe could conceive of it only in the absolute; and his is the counsel of perfection, if of a perfection almost beyond mortal powers. He sought for it in the verse of all poets; he sought, as few have ever sought, to concentrate it in his own verse; and he has left us at least a few poems, '*ciascun distinto e di fulgore e d'arte*,' in which he has found, within his own limits, the absolute.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

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THE RAVEN

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
 weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there
 came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my
 chamber door.
‘‘Tis some visitor,’ I muttered, ‘tapping at my
 chamber door :

 Only this and nothing more.’

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak
 December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost
 upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had
 sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for
 the lost Lenore,
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the
 angels name Lenore :

 Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each
purple curtain

Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never
felt before ;

So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I
stood repeating

‘Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my
chamber door,

Some late visitor entreating entrance at my
chamber door :

This it is and nothing more.’

Presently my soul grew stronger ; hesitating then
no longer,

‘ Sir,’ said I, ‘ or Madam, truly your forgiveness I
implore ;

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you
came rapping,

And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my
chamber door,

That I scarce was sure I heard you ’—here I
opened wide the door :—

Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood
there wondering, fearing,

Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared
to dream before ;

But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness
gave no token,

And the only word there spoken was the
whispered word, 'Lenore!'

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back
the word, 'Lenore':

Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within
me burning,

Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder
than before.

'Surely,' said I, 'surely that is something at my
window lattice;

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this
mystery explore;

Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery
explore:

'Tis the wind and nothing more.'

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many
a flirt and flutter,

In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly
days of yore.

Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute
stopped or stayed he;

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my
chamber door,

Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my
chamber door:

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into
smiling

By the grave and stern decorum of the counten-
ance it wore,—

‘Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,’ I
said, ‘art sure no craven,

Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from
the Nightly shore :

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s
Plutonian shore !’

Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear dis-
course so plainly,

Though its answer little meaning—little rele-
vancy bore ;

For we cannot help agreeing that no living
human being

Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his
chamber door,

Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his
chamber door,

With such name as ‘Nevermore.’

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust,
spoke only

That one word, as if his soul in that one word he
did outpour.

Nothing further then he uttered, not a feather
then he fluttered,

Till I scarcely more than muttered,—‘Other
friends have flown before ;

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes
have flown before.’

Then the bird said, ‘Nevermore.’

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
spoken,

‘Doubtless,’ said I, ‘what it utters is its only
stock and store,

Caught from some unhappy master whom un-
merciful Disaster

Followed fast and followed faster till his songs
one burden bore :

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy
burden bore

Of “Never—nevermore.”’

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into
smiling,

Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of
bird and bust and door ;

Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself
to linking

Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous
bird of yore,

What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and
ominous bird of yore

Meant in croaking ‘Nevermore.’

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable
expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my
bosom's core ;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at
ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light
gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-
light gloating o'er
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed
from an unseen censer
Swung by seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on
the tufted floor.
'Wretch,' I cried, 'thy God hath lent thee—by
these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories
of Lenore !
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget
this lost Lenore !'
Quoth the Raven, 'Nevermore.'

'Prophet!' said I, 'thing of evil! prophet still, if
bird or devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed
thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land
enchanted—

On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly,
I implore!

Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—
tell me, I implore!

Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

‘Prophet!’ said I, ‘thing of evil—prophet still,
if bird or devil!

By that Heaven that bends above us, by that God
we both adore,

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the dis-
tant Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels
name Lenore:

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
name Lenore!’

Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

‘Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!’
I shrieked, upstarting:

‘Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s
Plutonian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy
soul hath spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust
above my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy
form from off my door!’

Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still
is sitting

On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my
chamber door ;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's
that is dreaming,

And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his
shadow on the floor :

And my soul from out that shadow that lies float-
ing on the floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore !

THE BELLS

I

HEAR the sledges with the bells,
Silver bells !

What a world of merriment their melody fore-
tells !

How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night !

While the stars, that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle

With a crystalline delight ;

Keeping time, time, time,

In a sort of Runic rhyme,

To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells !
What a world of happiness their harmony fore-
tells !
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight !
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon !
Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells !
How it swells !
How it dwells
On the Future ! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells !

III

Hear the loud alarum bells,

Brazen bells :

What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells !

In the startled ear of night

How they scream out their affright !

Too much horrified to speak,

They can only shriek, shriek,

Out of tune,

In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the
fire,

In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic
fire,

Leaping higher, higher, higher,

With a desperate desire,

And a resolute endeavour,

Now—now to sit or never,

By the side of the pale-faced moon.

Oh, the bells, bells, bells !

What a tale their terror tells

Of Despair !

How they clang, and clash, and roar !

What a horror they outpour

On the bosom of the palpitating air !

Yet the ear it fully knows,

By the twanging

And the clanging,

How the danger ebbs and flows ;

Yet the ear distinctly tells,

In the jangling
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,—
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the
bells,
Of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamour and the clangour of the bells!

IV

Hear the tolling of the bells,
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody
compels!
In the silence of the night
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.
And the people—ah, the people,
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,
And who tolling, tolling, tolling
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman,
They are neither brute nor human,

They are Ghouls :
And their king it is who tolls ;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls

A pæan from the bells ;
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells,
And he dances, and he yells :
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells,

Of the bells :
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells—

To the sobbing of the bells ;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,
To the rolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells :

To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—

To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

THE HAUNTED PALACE

IN the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion,
It stood there ;
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odour went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
Porphyrogene,
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate ;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate !)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers now within that valley
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody ;
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh—but smile no more.

THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo ! 'tis a gala night

Within the lonesome latter years.
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly ;
Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their condor wings
Invisible Woe.

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot !
With its Phantom chased for evermore
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot ;
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude :
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude !
It writhes—it writhes !—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all !
And over each quivering form
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
While the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, ‘ Man,’
And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

ISRAFEL

And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who
has the sweetest voice of all God’s creatures. *Koran.*

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
Whose heart-strings are a lute ;
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamoured moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
Which were seven)
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings,
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty,
Where Love's a grown-up God,
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong,
Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song ;
To thee the laurels belong,
Best bard, because the wisest :
Merrily live, and long !

The ecstasies above

With thy burning measures suit :

Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,

With the fervour of thy lute :

Well may the stars be mute !

Yes, Heaven is thine ; but this

Is a world of sweets and sour ;

Our flowers are merely—flowers,

And the shadow of thy perfect bliss

Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell

Where Israfel

Hath dwelt, and he where I,

He might not sing so wildly well

A mortal melody,

While a bolder note than this might swell

From my lyre within the sky.

THE SLEEPER

At midnight, in the month of June,

I stand beneath the mystic moon.

An opiate vapour, dewy, dim,

Exhales from out her golden rim,

And, softly dripping, drop by drop,

Upon the quiet mountain-top,

Steals drowsily and musically

Into the universal valley.

The rosemary nods upon the grave ;
The lily lolls upon the wave ;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest ;
Looking like Lethe, see ! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All beauty sleeps !—and lo ! where lies
Irene, with her destinies !

O lady bright ! can it be right,
This window open to the night ?
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop ;
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully, so fearfully,
Above the closed and fringed lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
That, o'er the floor, and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall.
O lady dear, hast thou no fear ?
Why and what art thou dreaming here ?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees !
Strange is thy pallor : strange thy dress :
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness !

The lady sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep !
Heaven have her in its sacred keep !
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the pale sheeted ghosts go by.

My love, she sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep !
Soft may the worms about her creep !
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold :
Some vault that oft hath flung its black
And wingèd panels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls
Of her grand family funerals ;
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone :
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin,
It was the dead who groaned within !

•

FOR ANNIE

THANK Heaven ! the crisis,
The danger, is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last,
And the fever called ' Living '
Is conquered at last.

Sadly I know
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length :
But no matter !—I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly
Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead,
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing,
Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart :—ah, that horrible,
Horrible throbbing !

The sickness, the nausea,
The pitiless pain,
Have ceased, with the fever
That maddened my brain,
With the fever called 'Living'
That burned in my brain.

And oh ! of all tortures,
That torture the worst
Has abated—the terrible
Torture of thirst
For the naphthaline river
Of Passion accurst :
I have drank of a water
That quenches all thirst :

Of a water that flows,
With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
Feet under ground,
From a cavern not very far
Down under ground.

And ah ! let it never
Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy,
And narrow my bed ;
For man never slept
In a different bed :
And, *to sleep*, you must slumber
In just such a bed.

My tantalised spirit
Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
Regretting, its roses :
Its old agitations
Of myrtles and roses ;

For now, while so quietly
Lying, it fancies
A holier odour
About it, of pansies :
A rosemary odour,
Commingled with pansies,
With rue and the beautiful
Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
And the beauty of Annie,
Drowned in a bath
Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
To sleep on her breast,
Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
 She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
 To keep me from harm,
To the queen of the angels
 To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly
 Now, in my bed
(Knowing her love),
 That you fancy me dead ;
And I rest so contentedly
 Now, in my bed,
(With her love at my breast),
 That you fancy me dead,
That you shudder to look at me,
 Thinking me dead.

But my heart it is brighter
 Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
 For it sparkles with Annie :
It glows with the light
 Of the love of my Annie,
With the thought of the light
 Of the eyes of my Annie.

•

ULALUME

THE skies they were ashen and sober ;
The leaves they were crispèd and sere,
The leaves they were withering and sere ;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year ;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir :
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll,
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole,
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
But our thoughts they were palsied and sere,
Our memories were treacherous and sere,
For we knew not the month was October,
And we marked not the night of the year.
(Ah, night of all nights in the year !)

We noted not the dim lake of Auber
 (Though once we had journeyed down here),
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber
 Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
 And star-dials pointed to morn,
 As the star-dials hinted of morn,
At the end of our path a liquescent
 And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
 Arose with a duplicate horn,
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—'She is warmer than Dian :
 She rolls through an ether of sighs,
 She revels in a region of sighs :
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
 These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
 To point us the path to the skies,
 To the Lethean peace of the skies ;
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
 To shine on us with her bright eyes ;
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
 With love in her luminous eyes.'

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said—'Sadly this star I mistrust,
Her pallor I strangely mistrust :
Oh, hasten !—oh, let us not linger !
Oh, fly !—let us fly !—for we must.'
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust ;
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust,
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—'This is nothing but dreaming :
Let us on by this tremulous light !
Let us bathe in this crystalline light !
Its sibyllic splendour is beaming
With hope and in beauty to-night :
See, it flickers up the sky through the night !
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming, '
And be sure it will lead us aright :
We safely may trust to a gleaming
That cannot but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the
night.'

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom,
And conquered her scruples and gloom ;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb,
By the door of a legended tomb ;

And I said—‘What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?’
She replied—‘Ulalume—Ulalume—
’Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!’

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crispèd and sere,
As the leaves that were withering and sere,
And I cried—‘It was surely October
On this very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here,
That I brought a dread burden down here :
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here ?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber,
This misty mid region of Weir :
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.’

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may
know
By the name of Annabel Lee ;
And this maiden she lived with no other
thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child ;
 In this kingdom by the sea,
But we loved with a love that was more than love,
 I and my Annabel Lee ;
With a love that the wingèd seraphs of heaven
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful Annabel Lee ;
So that her highborn kinsmen came
 And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
 Went envying her and me ;
Yes ! that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we,
 Of many far wiser than we ;
And neither the angels in heaven above,
 Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee :

For the moon never beams, without bringing me
dreams

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;

And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright
eyes

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;

And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling — my darling — my life and my
bride,

In her sepulchre there by the sea,

In her tomb by the sounding sea.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne

In a strange city lying alone

Far down within the dim West,

Where the good and the bad and the worst
and the best

Have gone to their eternal rest.

There shrines and palaces and towers

(Time-eaten towers that tremble not)

Resemble nothing that is ours.

Around, by lifting winds forgot,

Resignedly beneath the sky

The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down

On the long night-time of that town ;

But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently,
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free :
Up domes, up spires, up kingly halls,
Up fanes, up Babylon-like walls,
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers,
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.

Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves ;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye,—
Not the gaily-jewelled dead,
Tempt the waters from their bed ;
For no ripples curl, alas,
Along that wilderness of glass ;
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea ;
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene !

But lo, a stir is in the air !
The wave—there is a movement there !
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide ;
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven !
The waves have now a redder glow,
The hours are breathing faint and low ;
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

ONCE it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell ;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sunlight lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless,
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.

Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides !
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye,
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave !
They wave :—from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep :—from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.

DREAM-LAND

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named Night,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule :
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of Space—out of Time.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms and caves and Titan woods,

With forms that no man can discover
For the tears that drip all over ;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore ;
Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire ;
Lakes that endlessly outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their still waters, still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily ;
By the mountains—near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever ;
By the grey woods, by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp ;
By the dismal tarns and pools
 Where dwell the Ghouls ;
By each spot the most unholy,
In each nook most melancholy,—
There the traveller meets aghast
Sheeted Memories of the Past :
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by,
White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region ;
For the spirit that walks in shadow
'Tis—oh, 'tis an Eldorado !
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not—dare not openly view it ;
Never its mysteries are exposed
To the weak human eye unclosed ;
So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringed lid ;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named Night,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

ROMANCE

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing
With drowsy head and folded wing
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted paroquet
Hath been—a most familiar bird—
Taught me my alphabet to say,
To lisp my very earliest word

While in the wild-wood I did lie,
A child—with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal condor years
So shake the very heaven on high
With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Through gazing on the unquiet sky ;
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings,
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away—forbidden things—
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

FAIRY-LAND

DIM vales, and shadowy floods,
And cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover
For the tears that drip all over !
Huge moons there wax and wane,
Again—again—again,
Every moment of the night,
Forever changing places,
And they put out the starlight
With the breath from their pale faces.

About twelve by the moon-dial,
One, more filmy than the rest
(A kind which, upon trial,
They have found to be the best),
Comes down—still down—and down,
With its centre on the crown
Of a mountain's eminence,
While its wide circumference
In easy drapery falls
Over hamlets, over halls,
Wherever they may be ;
O'er the strange woods, o'er the sea,
Over spirits on the wing,
Over every drowsy thing,
And buries them up quite
In a labyrinth of light ;
And then, how deep, oh, deep,
Is the passion of their sleep !
In the morning they arise,
And their moony covering
Is soaring in the skies
With the tempests as they toss,
Like—almost anything—
Or a yellow albatross.
They use that moon no more
For the same end as before,
Videlicet, a tent,—
Which I think extravagant.
Its atomies, however,
Into a shower dissever,

Of which those butterflies
Of Earth, who seek the skies,
And so come down again
(Never-contented things !),
Have brought a specimen
Upon their quivering wings.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

THY soul shall find itself alone
'Mid dark thoughts of the grey tombstone ;
Not one, of all the crowd, to pry
Into thine hour of secrecy.

Be silent in that solitude,
Which is not loneliness—for then
The spirits of the dead, who stood
In life before thee, are again
In death around thee, and their will
Shall overshadow thee ; be still.

The night, though clear, shall frown,
And the stars shall look not down
From their high thrones in the Heaven
With light like hope to mortals given,
But their red orbs, without beam,
To thy weariness shall seem
As a burning and a fever
Which would cling to thee forever.

Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish,
Now are visions ne'er to vanish ;
From thy spirit shall they pass
No more, like dewdrops from the grass.

The breeze, the breath of God, is still,
And the mist upon the hill
Shadowy, shadowy, yet unbroken,
Is a symbol and a token.
How it hangs upon the trees,
A mystery of mysteries !

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

TAKE this kiss upon the brow !
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow :
You are not wrong who deem
That my days have been a dream ;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone ?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—

How few ! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep—while I weep !
O God ! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp ?
O God ! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave ?
Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream ?

ALONE

FROM childhood's hour I have not been
As others were ; I have not seen
As others saw ; I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow ; I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone ;
And all I loved, *I* loved alone.
Then—in my childhood, in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From every depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still :
From the torrent, or the fountain,
From the red cliff of the mountain,
From the sun that round me rolled
In its autumn tint of gold,

From the lightning in the sky
As it passed me flying by,
From the thunder and the storm,
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view.

THE LAKE: TO —

In spring of youth it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot
The which I could not love the less,
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,
And the tall pines that towered around.

But when the Night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot, as upon all,
And the mystic wind went by
Murmuring in melody,
Then—ah, then—I would awake
To the terror of the lone lake.
Yet that terror was not fright,
But a tremulous delight:
A feeling not the jewelled mine
Could teach or bribe me to define,
Nor love—although the love were thine.

Death was in that poisonous wave,
And in its gulf a fitting grave
For him who thence could solace bring
To his lone imagining,
Whose solitary soul could make
An Eden of that dim lake.

BRIDAL BALLAD

THE ring is on my hand,
And the wreath is on my brow ;
Satins and jewels grand
Are all at my command,
And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well ;
But, when first he breathed his vow,
I felt my bosom swell,
For the words rang as a knell,
And the voice seemed his who fell
In the battle down the dell,
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to reassure me,
And he kissed my pallid brow,
While a reverie came o'er me,
And to the church-yard bore me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
'Oh, I am happy now !'

And thus the words were spoken,
And this the plighted vow ;
And though my faith be broken,
And though my heart be broken,
Here is a ring, as token
That I am happy now !

Would God I could awaken !
For I dream I know not how,
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken,
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.

LENORE

Ah, broken is the golden bowl ! the spirit flown
forever !
Let the bell toll !—a saintly soul floats on the
Stygian river ;
And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear ?—weep now
or nevermore !
See, on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love,
Lenore !
Come, let the burial rite be read—the funeral
song be sung :
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died
so young,
A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died
so young.

‘Wretches, ye loved her for her wealth and hated
her for her pride,
And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed
her—that she died!
How *shall* the ritual, then, be read? the requiem
how be sung
By you—by yours, the evil eye,—by yours, the
slandrous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and
died so young?’

Peccavimus ; but rave not thus! and let a Sabbath
song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no
wrong.
The sweet Lenore hath gone before, with Hope
that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should
have been thy bride :
For her, the fair and debonair, that now so lowly
lies,
The life upon her yellow hair but not within her
eyes ;
The life still there, upon her hair—the death
upon her eyes.

‘Avaunt! avaunt! from fiends below, the indig-
nant ghost is riven—
From Hell unto a high estate far up within the
Heaven—

From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside
the King of Heaven !
Let no bell toll, then,—lest her soul, amid its
hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note as it doth float up from the
damnèd Earth !
And I!—to-night my heart is light!—no dirge
will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of
old days !’

ELDORADO

GAILY bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old,
This knight so bold,
And o’er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,

He met a pilgrim shadow :
 ‘Shadow,’ said he,
 ‘Where can it be,
This land of Eldorado?’

 ‘Over the Mountains
 Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
 Ride, boldly ride,’
 The shade replied,
‘If you seek for Eldorado!’

EULALIE

I DWELT alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blush
 ing bride,
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my
smiling bride.

Ah, less—less bright
The stars of the night
Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
And never a flake
That the vapour can make
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl

Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded
curl,
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most
humble and careless curl.

Now doubt—now pain
Come never again,
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh ;
And all day long
Shines, bright and strong,
Astarte within the sky,
While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron
eye,
While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet
eye.

HYMN

At morn—at noon—at twilight dim,
Maria ! thou hast heard my hymn.
In joy and woe, in good and ill,
Mother of God, be with me still !
When the hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee.
Now, when storms of fate o'er cast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine !

SONG

I saw thee on thy bridal day,
When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee;

And in thine eye a kindling light
(Whatever it might be)
Was all on Earth my aching sight
Of loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame :
As such it well may pass,
Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
In the breast of him, alas !

Who saw thee on that bridal day,
When that deep blush *would* come o'er
thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee.

TO —

THE bowers whereat, in dreams, I see
The wantonest singing birds,
Are lips—and all thy melody
Of lip-begotten words

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrined,
Then desolately fall,
O God ! on my funereal mind
Like starlight on a pall ;

Thy heart—*thy* heart !—I wake and sigh,
And sleep to dream till day
Of the truth that gold can never buy,
Of the baubles that it may.

TO THE RIVER —

FAIR river ! in thy bright, clear flow
Of crystal, wandering water,
Thou art an emblem of the glow
Of beauty—the unhidden heart,
The playful mazziness of art,
In old Alberto's daughter ;

But when within thy wave she looks,
Which glistens then, and trembles,
Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
Her worshipper resembles ;
For in his heart, as in thy stream,
Her image deeply lies—
His heart which trembles at the beam
Of her soul-searching eyes.

A DREAM

IN visions of the dark night
I have dreamed of joy departed,
But a waking dream of life and light
Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah ! what is not a dream by day
To him whose eyes are cast
On things around him with a ray
Turned back upon the past ?

That holy dream, that holy dream,
While all the world were chiding,
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam
A lonely spirit guiding.

What though that light, through storm and
night,
So trembled from afar,
What could there be more purely bright
In Truth's day-star ?

‘ THE HAPPIEST DAY, THE HAPPIEST
HOUR ’

THE happiest day, the happiest hour
My seared and blighted heart hath known,
The highest hope of pride and power,
I feel hath flown.

Of power, said I? yes! such I ween;
But they have vanished long, alas!
The visions of my youth have been—
But let them pass.

And, pride, what have I now with thee?
Another brow may even inherit
The venom thou hast poured on me—
Be still, my spirit!

The happiest day, the happiest hour
Mine eyes shall see—have ever seen,
The brightest glance of pride and power,
I feel—have been.

But were that hope of pride and power
Now offered, with the pain
Even *then* I felt,—that brightest hour
I would not live again.

For on its wing was dark alloy,
And, as it fluttered, fell
An essence, powerful to destroy
A soul that knew it well.

STANZAS

How often we forget all time, when lone
Admiring Nature's universal throne ;
Her woods—her wilds—her mountains—the intense
Reply of HERS to OUR intelligence !

BYRON : *The Island.*

I

IN youth have I known one with whom the Earth,
In secret, communing held, as he with it,
In daylight, and in beauty from his birth ;
Whose fervid, flickering torch of life was lit
From the sun and stars, whence he had drawn
forth
A passionate light—such for his spirit was fit—
And yet that spirit knew not, in the hour
Of its own fervour, what had o'er it power.

II

Perhaps it may be that my mind is wrought
To a fever by the moonbeam that hangs o'er ;
But I will half believe that wild light fraught
With more of sovereignty than ancient lore
Hath ever told ; or is it of a thought
The unembodied essence, and no more,
That with a quickening spell doth o'er us pass
As dew of the night-time o'er the summer grass ?

III

Doth o'er us pass, when, as the expanding eye
To the loved object, so the tear to the lid
Will start, which lately slept in apathy?
And yet it need not be—that object—hid
From us in life, but common—which doth lie
Each hour before us—but *then* only bid
With a strange sound, as of a harp-string broken,
To awake us. 'Tis a symbol and a token

IV

Of what in other worlds shall be, and given
In beauty by our God to those alone
Who otherwise would fall from life and Heaven,
Drawn by their heart's passion, and that tone,
That high tone of the spirit, which hath striven,
Though not with Faith, with godliness,—whose
 throne
With desperate energy 't hath beaten down;
Wearing its own deep feeling as a crown.

EVENING STAR

'Twas noontide of summer,
 And mid-time of night;
And stars, in their orbits,
 Shone pale, through the light
Of the brighter, cold moon,

'Mid planets her slaves,
Herself in the Heavens,
Her beam on the waves.
I gazed awhile
On her cold smile,
Too cold—too cold for me ;
There passed, as a shroud,
A fleecy cloud,
And I turned away to thee,
Proud Evening Star,
In thy glory afar,
And dearer thy beam shall be ;
For joy to my heart
Is the proud part
Thou bearest in Heaven at night,
And more I admire
Thy distant fire
Than that colder, lowly light.

DREAMS

Oh, that my young life were a lasting dream !
My spirit not awakening, till the beam
Of an Eternity should bring the morrow !
Yes ! though that long dream were of hopeless
sorrow,
'Twere better than the cold reality
Of waking life to him whose heart must be,

And hath been still, upon the lovely earth,
A chaos of deep passion, from his birth.
But should it be—that dream eternally
Continuing—as dreams have been to me
In my young boyhood,—should it thus be given,
'Twere folly still to hope for higher Heaven.
For I have revelled, when the sun was bright
In the summer sky, in dreams of living light
And loveliness,—have left my very heart
In climes of mine imagining, apart
From mine own home, with beings that have been
Of mine own thought—what more could I have
seen?

'Twas once—and only once—and the wild hour
From my remembrance shall not pass—some power
Or spell had bound me; 'twas the chilly wind
Came o'er me in the night, and left behind
Its image on my spirit, or the moon
Shone on my slumbers in her lofty noon
Too coldly, or the stars,—howe'er it was,
That dream was as that night-wind—let it pass.

I have been happy, though in a dream.
I have been happy—and I love the theme—
Dreams! in their vivid colouring of life,
As in that fleeting, shadowy, misty strife
Of semblance with reality, which brings
To the delirious eye more lovely things
Of Paradise and Love—and all our own—
Than young Hope in his sunniest hour hath known

SONG

FROM 'AL AARAAF'

SPIRIT, that dwellest where,
In the deep sky,
The terrible and fair
In beauty vie !
Beyond the line of blue,
The boundary of the star
Which turneth at the view
Of thy barrier and thy bar,—
Of the barrier overgone
By the comets who were cast
From their pride, and from their throne,
To be drudges till the last,—
To be carriers of fire
(The red fire of their heart)
With speed that may not tire,
And with pain that shall not part,—
Who livest—*that* we know—
In Eternity—we feel—
But the shadow of whose brow
What spirit shall reveal ?
Though the beings whom thy Nesace,
Thy messenger, hath known,
Have dreamed for thy Infinity
A model of their own,
Thy will is done, O God !
The star hath ridden high

Through many a tempest, but she rode
 Beneath thy burning eye;
And here, in thought, to thee—
 In thought that can alone
Ascend thy empire and so be
 A partner of thy throne—
By wingèd Fantasy
 My embassy is given,
Till secrecy shall knowledge be
 In the environs of Heaven.

SONG TO LIGEIA

FROM 'AL AARAAF'

'NEATH blue-bell or streamer,
 Or tufted wild spray
That keeps from the dreamer
 The moonbeam away,
Bright beings! that ponder,
 With half-closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
 Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance through the shade, and
 Come down to your brow
Like—eyes of the maiden
 Who calls on you now,—
Arise from your dreaming
 In violet bowers
To duty beseeching
 These star-litten hours!

And shake from your tresses
 Encumbered with dew
The breath of those kisses
 That cumber them too—
Oh, how, without you, Love !
 Could angels be blest ?—
Those kisses of true love
 That lulled ye to rest !
Up ! shake from your wing
 Each hindering thing !
The dew of the night,
 It would weigh down your flight ;
And true love caresses,
 Oh, leave them apart :
They are light on the tresses,
 But lead on the heart.

Ligeia ! Ligeia !
 My beautiful one !
Whose harshest idea
 Will to melody run,
Oh, is it thy will
 On the breezes to toss ?
Or, capriciously still,
 Like the lone albatross,
Incumbent on night
 (As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
 On the harmony there ?

Ligeia ! wherever
Thy image may be,
No magic shall sever
Thy music from thee.
Thou hast bound many eyes
In a dreamy sleep,
But the strains still arise
Which thy vigilance keep :
The sound of the rain,
Which leaps down to the flower
And dances again
In the rhythm of the shower,
The murmur that springs
From the growing of grass,
Are the music of things,
But are modelled, alas !
Away, then, my dearest,
Oh, hie thee away
To springs that lie clearest
Beneath the moon-ray,—
To lone lake that smiles,
In its dream of deep rest,
At the many star-isles
That enjewel its breast !
Where wild flowers, creeping,
Have mingled their shade,
On its margin is sleeping
Full many a maid ;
Some have left the cool glade, and
Have slept with the bee ;

THE LYRICAL POEMS OF

Arouse them, my maiden,
On moorland and lea !
Go ! breathe on their slumber,
All softly in ear,
The musical number
They slumbered to hear :
For what can awaken
An angel so soon,
Whose sleep hath been taken
Beneath the cold moon,
As the spell which no slumber
Of witchery may test,—
The rhythmical number
Which lulled him to rest ?

TO SCIENCE

A PROLOGUE TO 'AL AARAAF'

SCIENCE ! true daughter of Old Time thou art,
Who alterest all things with thy peering
eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities ?
How should he love thee ? or how deem thee
wise,
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing ?

Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car,
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?

Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind-tree?

SILENCE

THERE are some qualities, some incorporate
things,

That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and
shade.

There is a twofold Silence—sea and shore,
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn
graces,

Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name's 'No More.'
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not:

No power hath he of evil in himself;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)

Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man), commend thyself to God!

TO ZANTE

FAIR isle, that from the fairest of all flowers
Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take,
How many memories of what radiant hours
At sight of thee and thine at once awake !
How many scenes of what departed bliss,
How many thoughts of what entombèd hopes,
How many visions of a maiden that is
No more—no more upon thy verdant slopes !
No more ! alas, that magical sad sound
Transforming all ! Thy charms shall please no
more
Thy memory no more. Accursèd ground !
Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,
O hyacinthine isle ! O purple Zante !
'Isola d'oro ! Fior di Levante !'

THE COLISEUM

TYPE of the antique Rome ! Rich reliquary
Of lofty contemplation left to Time
By buried centuries of pomp and power !
At length—at length—after so many days
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie),
I kneel, an altered and an humble man,

Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory.

Vastness, and Age, and Memories of Eld !
Silence, and Desolation, and dim Night !
I feel ye now, I feel ye in your strength,
O spells more sure than e'er Judæan king
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane !
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars !

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls ;
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat ;
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded
 hair
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and
 thistle ;
Here, where on golden throne the monarch
 lolloped,
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the hornèd moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones.

But stay ! these walls, these ivy-clad arcades,
These mouldering plinths, these sad and
 blackened shafts,
These vague entablatures, this crumbling
 frieze,
These shattered cornices, this wreck, this ruin,

These stones—alas ! these grey stones—are
they all,

All of the famed and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me ?

‘ Not all ’—the Echoes answer me—‘ not all !
Prophetic sounds and loud arise forever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memnon to the Sun.
We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.
We are not impotent, we pallid stones :
Not all our power is gone, not all our fame,
Not all the magic of our high renown,
Not all the wonder that encircles us,
Not all the mysteries that in us lie,
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory.’

TO HELEN

I SAW thee once—once only—years ago :
I must not say how many—but not many.
It was a July midnight ; and from out
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul,
soaring
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,
There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,

With quietude and sultriness and slumber,
Upon the upturned faces of a thousand
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe :
Fell on the upturned faces of these roses
That gave out, in return for the love-light,
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death :
Fell on the upturned faces of these roses
That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted
By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
I saw thee half reclining ; while the moon
Fell on the upturned faces of the roses,
And on thine own, upturned—alas, in sorrow !

Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight—
Was it not Fate (whose name is also Sorrow)
That bade me pause before that garden-gate
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses ?
No footstep stirred : the hated world all slept,
Save only thee and me—O Heaven ! O God !
How my heart beats in coupling those two
words !—

Save only thee and me. I paused, I looked,
And in an instant all things disappeared.
(Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted !)
The pearly lustre of the moon went out :
The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
The happy flowers and the repining trees,

Were seen no more : the very roses' odours
Died in the arms of the adoring airs.
All, all expired save thee—save less than thou :
Save only the divine light in thine eyes,
Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes :
I saw but them—they were the world to me :
I saw but them, saw only them for hours,
Saw only them until the moon went down.
What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten
Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres ;
How dark a woe, yet how sublime a hope ;
How silently serene a sea of pride ;
How daring an ambition ; yet how deep,
How fathomless a capacity for love !

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud ;
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees
Didst glide away. Only thine eyes remained :
They would not go—they never yet have gone ;
Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
They have not left me (as my hopes have) since ;
They follow me—they lead me through the years ;
They are my ministers—yet I their slave ;
Their office is to illumine and enkindle —
My duty, to be saved by their bright light,
And purified in their electric fire,
And sanctified in their elysian fire ;
They fill my soul with beauty (which is hope),
And are, far up in heaven, the stars I kneel to

In the sad, silent watches of my night ;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still—two sweetly scintillant
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun.

TO M. L. S——

Of all who hail thy presence as the morning ;
Of all to whom thine absence is the night,
The blotting utterly from out high heaven
The sacred sun ; of all who, weeping, bless thee
Hourly for hope, for life, ah ! above all,
For the resurrection of deep-buried faith
In truth, in virtue, in humanity ;
Of all who, on despair's unhallowed bed
Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
At thy soft-murmured words, ' Let there be light !
At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled
In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes ;
Of all who owe thee most, whose gratitude
Nearest resembles worship, oh, remember
The truest, the most fervently devoted,
And think that these weak lines are written by
him :
By him, who, as he pens them, thrills to think
His spirit is communing with an angel's.

TO — —

Nor long ago the writer of these lines,
In the mad pride of intellectuality,
Maintained 'the power of words'—denied that ever
A thought arose within the human brain
Beyond the utterance of the human tongue :
And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
Two words, two foreign soft dissyllables,
Italian tones, made only to be murmured
By angels dreaming in the moonlit 'dew
That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill,'
Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart
Unthought-like thoughts, that are the souls of
thought,—

Richer, far wilder, far diviner visions
Than even the seraph harper, Israfel
(Who has 'the sweetest voice of all God's
creatures'),

Could hope to utter. And I—my spells are
broken ;

The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand ;
With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
I cannot write—I cannot speak or think—
Alas, I cannot feel ; for 'tis not feeling,—
This standing motionless upon the golden
Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams,
Gazing entranced adown the gorgeous vista,
And thrilling as I see, upon the right,

Upon the left, and all the way along,
Amid empurpled vapours, far away
To where the prospect terminates—thee only.

A VALENTINE

For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous
eyes,

Brightly expressive as the twins of Leda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that nestling lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.

Search narrowly the lines ! they hold a treasure
Divine, a talisman, an amulet
That must be worn at heart. Search well the
measure—

The words—the syllables. Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labour :
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot

Which one might not undo without a sabre,

If one could merely comprehend the plot.

Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering

Eyes scintillating soul, there lie *perdus*

Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing

Of poets, by poets—as the name is a poet's, too.

Its letters, although naturally lying

Like the knight Pinto, Mendez Ferdinando,

Still form a synonym for Truth.—Cease trying !

You will not read the riddle, though you do the
best you can do.

AN ENIGMA

‘SELDOM we find,’ says Solomon Don Dunce,
 ‘Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet.
Through all the flimsy things we see at once
 As easily as through a Naples bonnet—
 Trash of all trash ! how can a lady don it ?
Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff,
Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff
 Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it.’
And, veritably, Sol is right enough.
The general tuckermanities are arrant
Bubbles, ephemeral, and so transparent ;
 But *this* is, now, you may depend upon it,
Stable, opaque, immortal—all by dint
Of the dear names that lie concealed within ’t.

TO ONE IN PARADISE

THOU wast all that to me, love,
 For which my soul did pine :
A green isle in the sea, love,
 A fountain and a shrine
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
 And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last !
 Ah, starry Hope, that didst arise
But to be overcast !
 A voice from out the Future cries,

‘On ! on !’—but o’er the Past
 (Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast.

For, alas ! alas ! with me
 The light of Life is o’er !
No more—no more—no more—
(Such language holds the solemn sea
 To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
 Or the stricken eagle soar.

And all my days are trances,
 And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy grey eye glances,
 And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
 By what eternal streams.

TO F——

BELoved ! amid the earnest woes
 That crowd around my earthly path
(Drear path, alas ! where grows
Not even one lonely rose),
 My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose.

And thus thy memory is to me
 Like some enchanted far-off isle
 In some tumultuous sea,—
 Some ocean throbbing far and free
 With storms, but where meanwhile
 Serenest skies continually
 Just o'er that one bright island smile.

TO F——s S. O——d

THOU wouldst be loved?—then let thy heart
 From its present pathway part not:
 Being everything which now thou art,
 Be nothing which thou art not.
 So with the world thy gentle ways,
 Thy grace, thy more than beauty,
 Shall be an endless theme of praise,
 And love—a simple duty.

TO ——

I HEED not that my earthly lot
 Hath little of Earth in it,
 That years of love have been forgot
 In the hatred of a minute:
 I mourn not that the desolate
 Are happier, sweet, than I,
 But that you sorrow for my fate
 Who am a passer-by.

TO MY MOTHER

BECAUSE I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find among their burning terms of love
None so devotional as that of 'Mother,'
Therefore by that dear name I long have called
you—

You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death in-
stalled you

In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother, my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

TO HELEN

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo ! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand !
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land !

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